

Commissioner's Weekly Field Memo
Friday, October 9, 2015

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Action Item Calendar

Today (October 9): [PARCC](#) test-options survey response
October 23: [Enrollment](#) census due
October 23: Presidential Scholars due (see [below](#))
November 1: School safety plan assurance (see [below](#))
November 10: Nonpublic data due (see [below](#))

November 12: Graduation, dropout data (see [below](#))
November 13: graduating class, at-home, nonclassified (see [below](#))

Notes from Commissioner Wagner

1. Scholarships available for high-achieving high-school seniors with financial need – Nov 3 deadline

We want to bring to your attention the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation College Scholarship, available to high-achieving high-school seniors with financial need. The scholarship can provide up to \$40,000 per year for four years to tuition, living expenses, books, and required fees in any 4-year accredited undergraduate institution for any area of study. The Foundation also provides access to one-on-one advising about college selection, aid, and transitioning to college. High-school seniors with unweighted GPAs of 3.5 or above and in the top 15 percent on SAT reading and math (1200+) or ACT composite (26+) exams are eligible. **The deadline is November 3.** For details, and to apply, go to:

<http://www.jkcf.org/scholarship-programs/college-scholarship/>.

2. XQ Super School Project seeks teams to design their own high school

On Wednesday, about 100 educators from the region – including several of us from Rhode Island – met in Cambridge to discuss a really big idea: Rethinking high school. The meeting inspired many participants to form a team and participate in the XQ Super School Project, in which teams will come up with plans to design their own school. The project notes: “Our mission at XQ Super School Project is to empower parents, teachers, students, politicians – all of us—to rethink high school.” They do so through communications and mobilization efforts, through rigor, and through galvanizing activities that “bring together all participants necessary to create change.”

We would like to encourage you to form a team in your community and to take on this exciting and important challenge.

As the XQ Super School folks noted:

Rethinking high school is an audacious goal—no one can do it alone. We need your support to reach every innovator, creator, maker, and builder to join this movement.

There are many ways to get involved, and we hope you'll learn more by visiting xgsuperschool.org and by downloading [these materials](#) that describe the movement.

Initial entries in the XQ Super School Challenge are due February 1, 2016. **November 15** is the deadline to share your concept and confirm eligibility.

For more information about the XQ Super School Challenge:

Explore the latest research.

Download resources and access expertise on school design. Start with modules on topics such as Students in the 21st Century, Youth Experience & Aspirations, and the Science of Adolescent Learning, at xgsuperschool.org/challenge.

Share what you learned with your colleagues and friends.

Let them know what excites you about this movement. And, consider sharing @XQAmerica on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#). Share your point of view on how you would [#RethinkHighSchool](#).

Join or start a team.

Tap your local networks or go to my.xgsuperschool.org. There you'll find the directory where people across the nation are raising their hands to help design the high schools our children deserve. (The Twitter hashtag is #RethinkHighSchool.)

Watch and learn.

Visit our [Youtube channel](#) for videos on the history and necessity of rethinking high school. Share them with your network.

In addition to the support provided by the XQ Institute, we at RIDE and other Rhode Island partners would love to work with and provide support to anyone interested in forming a team to participate in this design project. Please let us know if you have any questions or if you have a team that's ready to launch:

info@ride.ri.gov.

Regardless of who wins, the visioning process would be a powerful experience for your entire school community.

3. Superintendents must confirm that school committees have reviewed safety plans by November 1 – *Action Item*

Today Governor Raimondo issued a statement on school safety and gun control, and we should all be aware of the importance of maintaining, reviewing, and updating our school-safety and emergency-response plans. As you may recall, following the tragic events in Newtown, RIDE worked closely with the Emergency Management Agency, the State Police and local police, and other state and local agencies to develop model school safety plans and materials. Rhode Island has some of the strongest and most far-reaching laws and regulations on school-safety plans, and we are always vigilant in working to ensure that our schools are safe places for teaching and learning.

I want to remind you that, in accordance with state law (RIGL §16-21-25), each city, town, or regional department safety plan and all school emergency-response plans must be reviewed on an annual basis by the school committee and updated annually. These reviews and updates shall be completed by **November 1**.

Accordingly, you must log on to eRide and open the School Safety Plans Review module. Please affirm that your LEA school committee has

complied with this new law by selecting the checkbox confirming that your LEA school committee has reviewed and updated school-safety and emergency plans for the current school year and by clicking the *submit* button. If you have any questions, please contact the RIDE helpdesk, at <https://support.ride.ri.gov/>.

4. *Repeating Monday's Field Memo Alert: LEAs asked to nominate high-school seniors for Presidential Scholar award by October 23 – Action Item*

We are seeking from all Rhode Island high schools nominations of students to be named as 2016 Presidential Scholars. We encourage you to work with your high-school principals and to select one male student and one female student from each high school as your nominees for this award. Here are the criteria, as set forth by the U.S. Department of Education:

We encourage you to nominate students who demonstrate outstanding scholarship but who might not otherwise be nominated through the current SAT/ACT, Arts, or CTE recognition processes. All high-school seniors graduating between January and June of 2016 who are U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents and who attend public, parochial, or independent schools, as well as those who are home-schooled, are eligible. The candidates will go through the application process, and, as in the past, the 2016 U.S. Presidential Scholars will be selected by the Commission on Presidential Scholars and receive the Presidential Scholars Medallion at a ceremony in their honor in Washington, D.C.

It may be helpful to consider the following questions as you contemplate the selection of your nominees:

- What about the student makes him or her stand out as having outstanding scholarship?
- Were there special challenges or hurdles this student has overcome while still achieving high academic success?

In addition, it may be useful for you to know that the reviewers will be considering the following categories when evaluating the nominees at the semifinalist and Scholar evaluation levels:

- involvement and Service (in school and community);
- leadership and character;
- writing samples;
- academic achievements; and
- discretionary points for extraordinary achievement, heavy workload, family responsibilities, or obstacles overcome.

Each student you nominate should prepare for submission to RIDE an application that includes:

- his or her resume, including home mailing address;
- a letter of reference from you or a school official that explains how the student stands out as having outstanding scholarship; and
- a brief (approximately 500 to 750 words) essay that responds to this question: “What special challenges or hurdles have you overcome while still achieving high academic success?”

We remind you that this last point is particularly important to this nomination process, as these nominations will recognize students who would not be considered for this award based solely on their academic achievement.

Either you or your high-school principal(s) will be our contact in this process. We ask either you or your principals (not the nominated students) to submit your nominations to Lauren McCarthy (lauren.mccarthy@ride.ri.gov) by Friday, **October 23**.

From nominations we receive, we will select up to 20 nominees from Rhode Island (up to 10 male students, 10 female students).

The Commission will select finalists early next year, and Scholars will be announced in the spring. Scholars will receive an expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C.. For more information about the program, see:

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/psp/index.html>

Note: We copied high-school principals on Monday's Field Memo Alert.

5. *Reminder:* RIDE announces crowd-sourcing feature to build donor support for educator recognition, Teacher of the Year

We want to let you know that you can become a generous benefactor of our Educator Recognition programs. We have established a crowd-sourcing feature so that everyone can join in to help us salute Rhode Island educators. We are seeking to raise \$100,000 through donors and through crowd-sourcing, and we will use the funds to support our Teacher of the Year Program. The donated funds will support:

- the salary of a co-teacher to work alongside the Teacher of the Year;
- classroom resources and professional development for the State Teacher of the Year and for all District Teachers of the Year;
- participation in the State Teachers of the Year national conference; and
- our annual Salute to Rhode Island Educators at WaterFire Providence.

You can donate as little as \$1 – or as much as you'd like! To make your donation, go to:

www.Ride.ri.gov/Givetoteachers

And please help us spread the word among all friends of education.

6. *Reminder:* Registration open for Innovation Powered by Technology conference

Our 4th annual Innovation Powered by Technology Conference is scheduled for Saturday, October 17, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., at the Rhode Island Convention Center, 1 Sabin St., Providence.

Space is limited and registration is filling quickly, so register today to participate with and learn from your colleagues across Rhode Island and beyond. The presentations, keynote speakers, conferences sessions, vendors and more will provide a rich environment for you to:

- connect with fellow educators and school leaders in systemic planning around the effective use of technology and digital learning;
- collaborate with and be inspired by educators and students across the state;
- immerse yourself in ideas, strategies and resources;
- contribute to the lessons learned; and
- meet face to face with well-respected professionals in your field.

This annual conference will be bigger than ever. We hope to register more than 1,000 students, educators, and community leaders for our conversation about technology in education. To learn more about our keynote panelists, click [here](#).

Register today, at:

<http://ride.ri.gov/TechnologyConference>

If you have questions about the conference, please contact Sonya Barbosa, at techconference@ride.ri.gov.

The application deadline is **November 3**.

From RIDE

Students with Disabilities:

7. RIDE prepares, posts information on the inclusion of English Learners with disabilities on state assessments

States and local educational agencies (LEAs) have raised questions to the U.S. Department of Education related to the role of IEP teams in the participation of English Learners with disabilities in the annual state English Language Proficiency (ELP) assessment (ACCESS) and the inclusion of their ELP assessment results in Title III Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs). Accordingly, the U.S. Department of Education has issued guidance to help states and LEAs understand how Part B of the IDEA and Titles I and III of the ESEA address the inclusion of English Learners with disabilities in annual state ELP assessments. On the RIDE website, under [English Learners with Disabilities](#), you will find our document of key summary points, additional resources and tools, and links to the initial letter from the U.S. Department of Education, the initial Q&A document shared previously (and covered in our joint English Learners and Special Education Director Forum last year), and the recent addendum Q&A document. We hope this information will assist your school-based teams. Please contact Emily Klein, at 222-8985 or Emily.Klein@ride.ri.gov, if you have questions on this topic.

Legal:

8. Commissioner's ruling terminates agency from participation in federal food programs

In a ruling by the Commissioner, the John Hope Settlement House is terminated and disqualified from participation in the federal Child and Adult Care Food Program.

[http://www2.ride.ri.gov/applications/RideDirectory/DOCS/2015/008-15 The %20John Hope Settlement House,et al.Vs. RIDE-092915.pdf](http://www2.ride.ri.gov/applications/RideDirectory/DOCS/2015/008-15%20The%20John%20Hope%20Settlement%20House,et%20al.Vs.%20RIDE-092915.pdf)

Grants:

9. RIDE is soliciting comments on extension request for School Improvement Grants

RIDE recently submitted to the U.S. Department of Education a request to extend availability of Fiscal Year 2013 Title 1 1003(g) funds to be used in combination with the Fiscal Year 2014 funds for a new School Improvement Grant (SIG) competition. More information is available at [this link](#). Please send comments to stephen.osborn@ride.ri.gov as soon as possible.

10. RIDE accepting applications for mathematics partnership grants through November 13

We are pleased to announce that RIDE will be accepting applications for the Mathematics Science Partnership grant, *Enhancing Mathematics Content Knowledge and Pedagogical Skills of Pre-K – 2 Educators*. The terms of the grant require the establishment of a partnership between LEAs and Institutes of Higher Education (IHEs) with the intent of designing a professional development experience for mathematics educators working in Pre-K to grade-2 classrooms. The five main goals of the project are:

- to improve educators' content knowledge in grades Pre-K to 2, by providing high-quality professional development opportunities grounded in the Rhode Island Early Learning and Development Standards (RIELDS) and the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics (CCSS-M);
- to improve educators' pedagogical skill in grades Pre-K to 2 by providing high-quality professional development opportunities that leverage the Standards for Mathematical Practice in the CCSS-M;
- to create a system of continuous supports that will enhance the application of new content knowledge and pedagogical skills in the classroom; and
- to develop educators' confidence in learning new mathematics content, understanding the development of mathematics knowledge

and skills in young children, and teaching and assessing children's progress toward the RIELDS and CCSS-M.

RIDE will host a meet-and-greet session on October 19, from 3 to 4 p.m. in room 501 for LEAs and IHEs to come together and explore the possibility of establishing a working partnership. Contact Mona Gevorkian, at 222-8490 or at mona.gevorkian@ride.ri.gov, to register or if you are interested in but unable to attend.

The grant application and support materials can be accessed from the [RIDE website](http://ride.ri.gov/InstructionAssessment/Mathematics.aspx) (<http://ride.ri.gov/InstructionAssessment/Mathematics.aspx>). Complete applications must be submitted by 4 p.m. on **November 13**.

If you have questions these grants, contact Patricia Carnevale, at 222-8458 or patricia.carnevale@ride.ri.gov; Susan Pagliaro, at 222-2644 or susan.pagliaro@ride.ri.gov; or Judi Stevenson-Garcia, at 222-8176 or judi.stevenson-garcia@ride.ri.gov.

Data Collection:

11. RIDE provides data-collection updates

As of Wednesday, RIDE has had 97 percent of all LEAs submit their enrollment data. The October 1 enrollment snapshot is based on the enrollment data collected. These data are used for federal and state reporting, including funding LEAs. This is why it is critical to have the enrollment data submitted in a timely fashion.

Only 70 percent of LEAs submitted their Teacher-Course-Student (TCS) data. The TCS data are used for state reporting, assessment (PARCC student registration), accountability, teacher evaluation, and instructional support, among other things.

Just 11 percent of LEAs of those eligible have submitted their dual/concurrent enrollment data. This data collection supports Governor Raimondo's plan to pay for students to earn college credits while enrolled

in high school. The first snapshot of this data for comparison to Postsecondary Education enrollment will be taken on October 16.

12. RIDE announces changes to data-collection process

Starting with the October Enrollment reports (Submission and 10/1 Snapshot), we will no longer be accepting the signed reports via fax. The report instructions have been updated to display the eRIDEinternal@ride.ri.gov email address to which you should send the signed and scanned report.

13. *Reminder:* Several data collections are open or due in the next month

The following are the data-collection deadlines for October and November:

- October 23: [October 1 Snapshot - Enrollment Census - Due](#)
Duplicates and demographic differences need to be at zero
- October 23: [Submission and Snapshot 10/1 Reports - Enrollment Census - Due](#)
- November 10: [Non-Public Schools Attestations - Due](#)
- November 12: [Graduate and Dropout Reporting via Enrollment Census - Due](#)
- November 12: [Summer Exits Through Enrollment Census](#)
- November 13: [At-Home Instructed Students – Due](#)
- November 13: [June Graduating Class Fall Membership - Due](#)
- November 13: [Non-Certified Staff Report - Due](#)

Information about upcoming data collections can be found on the [data collection calendar](#). Weekly collection [webinars](#) provide details regarding upcoming collections, along with a question-and-answer period.

Assessments:

14. PARCC Fall Block Testing trials should be under way within the next few weeks

Those schools participating in the PARCC Fall Block Testing should be conducting infrastructure trials in the next few weeks. Almost every aspect of the testing technology is new or significantly updated. The most recent technology bulletin has a technology-readiness section that you should review. If you need any assistance or if you have questions regarding the testing technology or would like someone from RIDE to be onsite for your infrastructure trial, you can contact Greg Martin, at Gregory.Martin@ride.ri.gov or 222-8495.

From other state departments and agencies

15. Rebates available on purchases of Naloxone syringes

Attorney General Peter F. Kilmartin has signed an agreement that will provide rebates on the purchase of Naloxone syringes. You can read about the rebate program here:

<http://www.riag.ri.gov/Initiatives/NaloxoneRebate.php>

From the U.S. Department of Education

16. Secretary Duncan, Attorney General Lynch, et al. announce initiative to eliminate chronic absenteeism

Education Secretary Arne Duncan, the secretaries of the U.S. Departments Health and Human Services and Housing and Urban Development, and the U.S. Attorney General have issued a joint letter announcing their shared commitment to “building capacity across the federal government to support states and local communities in the work of addressing and eliminating chronic absenteeism.” You can read the letter here:

<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/secletter/151007.html>

They have also released *Every Student, Every Day: A Community Toolkit to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism*, which is available at:

<http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/chronicabsenteeism/index.html>.

RIDE will post this field memo on Tuesday, at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/InsideRIDE/FieldMemos.aspx>